

Meeting Summary
Sustainable Communities Planning Grant
Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium
Tuesday, November 30, 2010 10:00 AM to Noon
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor

ATTENDEES:

Adam Aschmann, Greater Houston Builders Association; Becky Blatnica, H-GAC; Mayra Bontemps, Harris County Community Services; Amy Boyers, H-GAC; Jared Briggs, Harris County Community Services; Jay Blazek Crossley, Houston Tomorrow; David Crossley, Houston Tomorrow; Ronald Drachenberg, Fort Bend County; Joanne Ducharme, Montgomery County; DC Dunham, Bay City Community Development Corporation; Whitney Fleming, United Way of Greater Houston; Victoria Herrin, Houston Wilderness; David Hitchcock, Houston Advanced Research Center; Michael Kramer, City of Houston; Christy Lambright, Harris County Community Services; Sungmin Lee, City of Houston; Kurt Luhrsen, METRO; Cheryl Mergo, H-GAC; Gina Mitteco, H-GAC; Amar Mohite, City of Houston; Martha Murphree, Blueprint Houston; Tina Pham, VN Teamwork; Diana PonceDeLeon, City of Houston; Allen Richey, H-GAC; Andrea Roberts, City of Houston; Donna Rybiski, Center for Houston's Future; Lori Schwarz, City of Galveston; Jeff Taebel, H-GAC; Andrea Tantillo, H-GAC; Amanda Thorin, H-GAC; Amanda Timm, LISC; Laura Timme, Neighborhood Centers; Joe Webb, Blueprint Houston; Chuck Wemple, Gulf Coast Economic Development District; Shelley Whitworth, H-GAC; Nicholas Williams, H-GAC; Paul Wright, LISC; Vince Yokom, Waller County Economic Development Partnership; and Chelsea Young, H-GAC..

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meredith Dang, H-GAC, called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Summary notes from the November 3, 2010, Coordinating Committee meeting were distributed.

2. HUD Status Report and Propose Revised Budget

Meredith Dang reported that H-GAC staff had met, via phone conference, with HUD representatives to discuss budget amendments to decrease the original budget of \$5 million to the \$3.75 million grant award. A draft budget was distributed. Significant decreases from the original budget include:

\$114,000 for H-GAC personnel

\$572,250 for consulting services

\$400,000 for case studies

H-GAC will absorb direct costs, such as printing.

As required by the NOFA, policy research and peer review was originally included in the budget for \$150,000. H-GAC staff recommended that the Coordinating Committee could serve the same function as a peer review of the work products and plan because of the diversity of experts on the Committee. Members could use some of their staff time for the peer review and policy research as part of their in-kind match. HUD agreed that the option satisfied their requirements.

The proposed budget has been sent to HUD for review, but H-GAC staff had not heard back from them with approval as of November 30, 2010.

Assuming the Coordinating Committee agrees with the budget document forwarded to HUD, the next steps will be as follows:

- HUD approval of finalized budget
- H-GAC and HUD sign contract (as of November 30, 2010, H-GAC staff remained optimistic that the contract could be brought before the H-GAC Board of Directors as early as December)
- Work plan finalized (60 days after contract is signed)
- Formal MOUs received from Coordinating Committee members (120 days after contract is signed)

Points of Discussion:

The original match from Coordinating Committee members at the time of the grant application was \$2.5 million. Since the award amount was less than the requested amount, HUD cannot compel Committee members to maintain that commitment and are open to discussion if a Committee member needs to decrease its match. However, HUD recommends that all match remain the same as noted in the grant application. Match, both cash and in-kind, will be detailed in the formal Memorandums of Understanding.

3. Revised MOUs

Nicholas Williams, H-GAC, gave an overview of the revised MOUs. The revised MOUs will be similar to the ones submitted with the grant application with the following changes:

- Each MOU will include a designation of a person or position to serve on the Coordinating Committee. An alternate member will also be named in the MOU.
- Specific match commitments must be detailed in the MOU.
- MOUs must be signed no later than 120 days after the contract is signed

Revised MOUs will be provided to the Coordinating Committee members by December 15, 2010.

Points of Discussion:

Some Coordinating Committee members requested that the previous MOUs be revised to reflect their match. H-GAC staff will work with Committee members to facilitate this request. H-GAC staff will also confirm with HUD that the specific staffing reporting requirements can be satisfied by listing a position rather than a person.

Coordinating Committee members and their staff can begin documenting time spent working on the project after the contract is signed between HUD and H-GAC.

Anyone who needs guidance on reconciling or documenting match commitments should send an email to meredith.dang@h-gac.com.

4. Bylaws Subcommittee Report and Discussion

Allen Richey, H-GAC, presented recommendations from the By-Laws Subcommittee (comprised of representatives from H-GAC, City of Houston, Harris County, Houston Tomorrow and Waller County EDP). A summary of the by-laws is as follows:

- The Organizational Chart depicts the entire Consortium, including the Coordinating Committee, stakeholder groups, the Governmental Advisory Committee and the public.

- The Coordinating Committee is the governing body of the Consortium.
- Specific Technical Advisory and Regional Transect committees were defined in the application, however, the Coordinating Committee reserves the right to create and populate additional groups.
- Coordinating Committee members must regularly attend meetings. After three absences, the individual member will be asked to resign from the Committee and a new representative should be assigned by the agency/organization represented.
- Attendance of alternates does not count as an absence. Submitting proxy votes in lieu of attendance does count as an absence.
- Officers will need to be selected for the Coordinating Committee. Officers will have limited powers, but will help drive the work of the Committee. Specific roles of the officers will be defined in the by-laws.
- H-GAC will be designated as the fiscal agent for the grant.
- Roberts Rules of Order will be adopted to conduct meetings in a professional manner.
- The public comment section needs to be fleshed out more, but should allow for members of the public to make comments during Coordinating Committee meetings.
- An affirmative vote represents 60% of the voting members present, as discussed in the application. This percentage must be obtained to pass any action or by-laws amendment.
- The by-laws allow for the expiration of the by-laws.

Comments on the draft by-laws should be sent to meredith.dang@h-gac.com by December 10, 2010. A final draft will be delivered to Coordinating Committee members before December 15, 2010. The final draft will be considered for adoption at the December 20, 2010, meeting.

Anyone interested in participating on the nominating committee for Coordinating Committee officers is asked to send their intent to serve to meredith.dang@h-gac.com by December 6, 2010.

Points of Discussion:

Some communities allow public comments to last three minutes each and are strict on the time limits. Others are more lax. The Coordinating Committee should decide how stringent the three-minute rule will be for its meetings.

A meeting procedures/operating policy document should be developed in addition to the by-laws. This policy should be approved by the Coordinating Committee and referenced in the by-laws.

It was suggested by a committee member that proxy votes should not be allowed since votes will take place without the benefit of discussion. However, members should be allowed to attend meetings via teleconference.

Voting structure may need to be clarified to indicate a “one agency, one vote” policy.

Subcommittee structure and roles may be fleshed out in the by-laws or another document. Roles, purpose and membership of the stakeholder groups will be an agenda item on the December 20, 2010, meeting. A workflow chart may address some of the Coordinating Committee members’ concerns about subcommittee functions.

H-GAC's Board of Directors will appoint the Governmental Advisory Committee of no more than 20 members to help gauge and garner political support for plans. The Governmental Advisory Committee will not be responsible for making policy. The role of the Governmental Advisory Committee should be made clear in the by-laws.

An FTP or otherwise accessible online document sharing site should be developed for use by the Coordinating Committee, to include agendas and draft documents that will be included in meeting discussions.

5. Public Engagement RFP Subcommittee Report and Discussion

Meredith Dang presented a discussion from the Public Engagement RFP Sub-Committee regarding hiring a consultant to develop and implement a public engagement strategy. As per the grant requirements, the consultant will be vetted and contracted through H-GAC's procurement policy, which can take up to three months.

Following a robust discussion at the November 3, 2010, meeting regarding Coordinating Committee members' eligibility to propose as a contractor or sub-contractor for the public engagement RFP, H-GAC proposed an idea that would have allowed interested Committee members to propose on the RFP without having an unfair advantage over other proposers. This process involved developing the RFP only with the involvement of Committee members that are ineligible to propose on contracts (i.e. governmental agencies and others not interested in proposing). To ensure the full Committee had an opportunity to provide input, H-GAC would release the draft RFP for public comment, which would provide an opportunity for Committee members as well as members of the public to comment on the draft without giving committee members inside knowledge of the RFP content.

Points of discussion:

HUD was impressed by the amount of resources the Committee brought to the table in the grant application and emphasized during a phone conversation with H-GAC staff that it is important for the Committee not to develop policies and plans that create barriers to non-profit participation.

A criterion in the RFP could include a set aside for a certain percentage of the work to be performed by non-profit sub-contractors.

Only one contract will be issued for public outreach. The contractor will determine the sub-contractors at the time of proposal application.

Coordinating Committee members can develop a broad citizen participation plan to be included in the RFP and to be added to the by-laws or meeting/operating policy document. The consultant will be the technical advisor who develops and implements the detailed action plan for public engagement.

Several committee members voiced the opinion that it is a conflict of interest for members of the Coordinating Committee to propose as contractors or sub-contracts because not only would they have

advance notice of the RFP, they would also have influence over the decision-makers determining the contract award.

Action Item: David Crossley made a motion, seconded by D.C. Dunham, that members of the Coordinating Committee of the Consortium or their designees be ineligible to propose on contracts resulting from RFPs issued by the Consortium (for the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development project). By a show of hands, and voice vote from those on teleconference, Committee members present voted 20-0 to approve the motion.

The public engagement sub-committee will meet either the week of December 6 or December 13, depending on members' availability, to discuss the proposed scope of work for the consultant RFP contract as well as broader issues of creating a Citizen Participation Plan.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, December 20, 10:00 AM
H-GAC Conference Room A, Second Floor
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

Please contact Meredith Dang, H-GAC
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Meredith.dang@h-gac.com